

West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service

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The Royal Wolverhampton 
NHS Trust

Worcestershire Health and Care 
NHS Trust

Birmingham Community Healthcare 
NHS Foundation Trust

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership 
NHS Trust

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West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service

**Delivering Best Care,
Preserving Best Evidence**

The West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service offers holistic assessment and care for children and young people under 18 years of age who are victims of rape or serious sexual assault or where there is suspected sexual abuse, including:

- Physical examination
- Collection of forensic evidence
- Screening and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Emergency contraception
- Counselling and support package

The service is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

Information for Professionals

Birmingham Community Healthcare 
NHS Foundation Trust

The West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service is a region-wide service which provides expert care for children and young people who have disclosed sexual assault, or who may have been subject to sexual abuse. Clients are seen by an experienced Paediatrician with specialist training in forensic examination and are supported by a Crisis Worker.

Who to refer

Our service is open to children and young people:

- Who are under the age of 18 (up to 20th birthday if significant learning difficulties and in full time education)
- Who either reside within the following boundaries or where the offence has been committed in that area:
 - West Midlands Police Force Area
 - Warwickshire Police Force Area
 - West Mercia Police Force Area
- Who are victims of rape or serious sexual assault, or
- Where there is suspected sexual abuse.

Reasons for referral may include:

- Disclosure by the child or young person
- Concerns by parent or professional that sexual abuse may be a possibility, for any reason.

If in any doubt, please contact us to discuss your concerns - our doctors are able to advise whether a referral is appropriate.

There when needed

A team is on-call at one of our centres, **24 hours a day, every day of the year.**

Where there is concern about recent sexual assault (i.e. acute cases - those within 3 weeks since the last assault), clients will be seen the same day. We aim to be there within 60 minutes.

We also offer routine clinic appointments for historic cases, with a choice of time, examiner and location. These are suitable for historical allegations (3 weeks or more since the last assault), where forensic sampling is not required.

Our Centres

Clients and their families will be seen within a warm, welcoming and safe environment, which has been specially adapted for the age-group. We have four centres serving the West Midlands:

- **New Cross Hospital**, Wolverhampton
- **Blue Sky Centre**, George Elliot Hospital, Nuneaton
- **Oasis Suite**, Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham
- **The Glade**, Bransford, Worcester

One of these centres will be available to see acute cases every day of the year. Most weekdays, a second centre will run planned clinics.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The welfare of the child or young person is paramount. It is essential that wider safeguarding issues are considered, including for those young people 16-17 years of age (for example to consider the possibility of Child Sexual Exploitation). Strategy discussion between statutory agencies should occur in every case.

Health professionals should refer to the Police or Children's Social Care, following local safeguarding pathways. The police have Specially Trained Officers who will treat the client with respect and dignity and advise them on the process involved.

What to do if your patient doesn't want to report to the Police or Social Care?

After you have carefully considered safeguarding issues, and discussed it with our team, we accept direct referrals from health professionals.

Rape and sexual assault can have a serious long-term impact on the health and well-being of the client and their family. The most important thing is that they feel that they are believed and they get appropriate support as soon as possible. In the first instance issues such as emergency contraception and sexual health screening need to be addressed.

We do accept self-referrals, and are able to store forensic samples whilst the young person decides if he/she wishes to make a police report.

Consent and assent

We strive to make the examination as child-friendly as possible. We will only examine a child or young person who agrees to be examined (assents), regardless of age. We will keep them informed, and as much as possible, give them control over what is done. Sometimes this may mean only doing part-examinations, or agreeing that they take their own swabs.

We also need formal written consent; this can be achieved in a number of ways, such as:

- The Young Person can sign their own consent if they are Gillick Competent (this should not be assumed, particularly if under the age of 12, or if known to have learning difficulties; please discuss with the doctor)
- A person with Parental Responsibility is aware of referral and agrees to attend
- A Court Order with directive to examine is in place.

Aftercare

All our clients will be offered a bespoke aftercare package, tailored to their individual needs. Advice and screening for sexually transmitted infections, emergency contraception and pregnancy testing will be offered. We will also make any referral to other specialties such as Urology, Gynaecology, General Paediatrics or Mental Health teams that are needed.

Counselling

Any child or young person aged 5 - 17 years old who undertakes a medical examination and/or has been sexually abused or exploited will be offered specialist counselling. If the counsellor thinks it would be beneficial to talk to the supportive adult about their child's counselling (for example in the case of the younger child or a child with specific additional needs), the counsellor would do this. The child or young person would always be kept informed about what information was being shared with whom and why and this would be discussed in age appropriate language that respects the autonomy of the child or young person.

For children aged 0 - 5 years old, the counselling support will be available to the child's parent and or carer. Being able to talk about their feelings and thoughts can benefit them and help them to provide the best support for their child.

The counselling will be provided by specialist, registered, counsellors and psychotherapists who are experienced in supporting children and young people and helping them cope and recover from the impacts of sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation.

All clients will be offered counselling sessions which have been set up in a number of locations which have been set up to provide a safe and supportive environment.

A unique partnership

**Delivering Best Care,
Preserving Best Evidence**

The West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service is a unique partnership between the NHS, private sector and voluntary agencies, working together to bring specialist skills and experience to deliver best care and preserve best evidence.

We are:

- Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
- Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust
- Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust
- G4S
- Rape Crisis Centres Consortium (WMRSASC and CRASAC)

The West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service can be reached through a single point of contact telephone number:

Tel: 0800 953 4131